RELIGIOUS SPACES: THE WARRIOR ARCHETYPE, THE STORYTELLER ARCHETYPE

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Abstract: The analysis of the religious imaginary at the border or intersection of sacred spaces is underlain by a new way of understanding the world from a religious perspective. Both in archaic times and in contemporary history, the religious spaces are not placed in a relation of autarchy or mutual exclusion; quite the contrary – in a complex system of relations that configure infinite textual and ideological loans, spectacular re-significations of traditions in the theological or liturgical area, and fascinating re-writings or re-elaborations of the narrative and imaginary universe. The sub-stellar world of seen realities and unseen realities is epitomized in the often inextricable algorithms that permanently compose, decompose and recompose the mosaic of religious identities or ways of conceiving a religious identity as a form of otherness, the complex structures of the sacred spaces, and the world religious order. The archetypal founder of a religion is usually followed by the Warrior archetype that expands the religious space by conquering lands and peoples, and by the Storyteller archetype that conquests souls and spirits by preaching the religious message. At the level of preaching the religious truth, any religious space is reducible to the historical presence of the Warrior King and Founding Conqueror, or to the spiritual symbol or image of the Storyteller or the Sage placed at the center of a circle made up of the bodies and souls of his disciples.

Keywords: Religious spaces; the Warrior archetype; the Storyteller archetype; historical time; mimesis; Abrahamic religions; Judaism; Christianity; Islam.

Studies in history of religious ideas and religious anthropology often focus on aspects located within a single sacred space. Beyond the value and limits of such a working methodology, it is worth mentioning the possibility or necessity of constructing parallel investigations of the sacred spaces, comparative perspectives on the religious phenomenon as a whole, capable of revealing the religious realities specific to border or intersection areas that delineate, draw nearer or farther the sacred spaces. This new approach will soon emphasize a certain kind of religiousness, built as a result of multiple forces and influences acting within neighboring religious spaces.

The analysis of the religious imaginary at the border or intersection of sacred spaces is underlain by a new way of understanding the world from a religious perspective. Both in archaic times and in contemporary history, the religious spaces are not placed in a relation of autarchy or mutual exclusion; quite the contrary – in a complex system of relations that configure infinite textual and ideological loans, spectacular re-significations of traditions in the theological or liturgical area, and fascinating re-writings or re-elaborations of the narrative and imaginary universe. The sub-stellar world of seen realities and unseen realities is epitomized in the often inextricable algorithms that permanently compose, decompose and recompose the mosaic of religious identities or ways of conceiving a religious identity as a form of otherness, the complex structures of the sacred spaces, and the world religious order.

Numerous overlaps of religious levels are determined by the plot of the historical time itself. Military conquests, from Nebuchadnezzar to Alexander the Great and Vespasian, from Abu Bakr to Genghis Khan, open the path to cultural hybridization, which is, at the same time, a path of dissemination of religious ideas. Beyond destruction and bloodshed, beyond the resentments that the defeated hold against the victors for a while, the religious spaces configure and reconfigure the space, time and souls of believers, set norms, canons and

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sacred texts, preserve the force and cohesion of tradition, organize the missionary offensive or defense from the alien missionary effort, reject or accept external influences, metamorphose and assimilate external influences until they become harmoniously integrated within the tradition, and change archaic customs, rituals or pagan traditions anterior to the construction of the sacred space into basic elements of the shared or individual religious imaginary. In this paradigmatic wake, the men-of-war, the merchant ships and caravans carry not only goods and fashions from East to West and from West to East, but also sacred manuscripts or manuscripts susceptible to irradiate religious ideas and behaviors, exotic myths, or wisdom narratives.

The archetypal founder of a religion is usually followed by the Warrior archetype that expands the religious space by conquering lands and peoples, and by the Storyteller archetype that conquests souls and spirits by preaching the religious message. At the level of preaching the religious truth, any religious space is reducible to the historical presence of the Warrior King and Founding Conqueror, or to the spiritual symbol or image of the Storyteller or the Sage placed at the center of a circle made up of the bodies and souls of his disciples. Rabbinic sages, *tannaim* and *amoraim*, apostles, Christian priests and monks, Sufi imams and masters, Buddhist, Lamaist, Taoist or Confucian masters, all these religious men illustrate the archetypal image of the Storyteller or the Sage who preaches to his disciples. From an anthropological-literary perspective, this zero level of the religious space has been remarkably and loftily expressed by Mario Vargas Llosa in *El Hablador*[1].

As I described in my book entitled *Lógos: Time and Text. A Study in Human and Divine Rhetorics*[2], the history of the sacred spaces re-inscribes the time of religious narratives and the religious imaginary in the time of the universe, and the temporal and fictive / non-fictive continuity of the creation are, probably, entwined in the train of reality and magic that the mystery of the living carries with the spiritual grace of preaching. The refinement of this ineffable reconstruction involves the crosspollination of fiction and history, and the mechanisms of the imaginary, which accomplish the restoration of the non-extant world, allow their being shrouded in the often anthropomorphous fabric of the story. Therefore, writing history *mimics* the types of 'setting into a plot' or *mimesis*, taken from the literary tradition. The centuries that include the narrative substance of the historical time are concatenated by the revelation of a *shared meaning*, that of the hermeneutic 'collision' able to reveal the neighboring or the alchemical alloy between temporality-history and plot-fiction, two notions that, apparently, do not merge their meanings. The mastery or craftsmanship of the preacher, author of doctrine or rhetorician is, nonetheless, visible precisely in the ingenuity, complexity and spiritual incandescence of the exposure or argumentation. If the announcement of the aims of an exegetic undertaking of such magnitude instantly ensures *captatio benevolentiae*,the bridge of the preached message is only accomplished with the remembrance of a novel truth, whose novelty, as is always the case, is just the textual-ephemeral redemption of its archaism, an archaism that subsists in a state of occultation in the unreality of the present, in order to grasp the echoes of immemorial ages[3].

According to Paul Ricœur, the Augustinian gnostic-agnostic understanding of time is placed in relation to the Aristotelian notion of *mimesis*[4], an understanding resulting from the palette of colors attributed to this term by tradition, and by Plato and the Pythagoreans

[1]See Mario Vargas Llosa, *El hablador*, Madrid, Alfaguara, 2016.
[2] See Silviu Lupascu, *Lógos: Time and Text. A Study in Human and Divine Rhetorics*, Bucharest, eLiteratura, 2013, pp. 19-24.
[3]See Paul Ricœur, *Temps etrécit*, I-III, Seuil, Paris, 1983-1985, III, p. 266, pp. 268-70.
[4] Plot, fiction.

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especially[5]. Augustine asserts that the present *is* or rather stands as the ontological foundation of the historical time, and as such authentically and consequently operates a reduction to the present time, hypostasized as a *look* both on the time past and on the time future, identifying the former with *memory* and the latter with the *expectation*. By this reasoning, doubled with the postulate of the time's unknown theocratic origin, one builds the existence of the *threetimes*: "a present of things past, a present of things present and a present of things future". The ultimate truth of the trialectical time, underlain without mediation by the principle of the living, of the being, is however, accessible only by the gift of divine illumination following the upward, self-sacrificial effort of prayer. As long as he conceives time as a sacred category, an attribute of God, Augustine relatively identifies the notions of temporal existence, created being, the human mind, and this focalization of the temporal continuity of the world over the Adamic living, surrogate of the infinite divine living, is equivalent with the meaninglessness of the discussion on the existence or non-existence of time before creation. In the XVIIth – XVIIIth centuries, Emanuel Swedenborg (1688 – 1772 C. E.) is among the ones who fell prey to this speculative temptation, but he renounced its sortileges at the age of the dogmatic-visionary maturity, when he called it "a sin of youth" compared to the understanding of God as "space without space" and "time without time"[6]. The theandrical temporal pattern built by Augustine preserves the classical definitions in the background, but also introduces into the weaving of the Hellenistic wisdom the threads of the Biblical, *Torah* and *New Testament* spirituality, meant to consolidate another kind of sensitivity in front of the temporal continuity: a Messianic-centered time of the Genesis and of the Revelation, a Messianic historical time of expectation and fulfillment[7].

In the broad perspective of the intertwining of historical time and literary history, Paul Ricœur threw into relief the human existence as the common denominator of temporal continuity and narrative continuity: "Time becomes human time to the extent that it is organized after the manner of a narrative; a narrative, in turn, is meaningful to the extent that it portrays the features of temporal experience[8]." This sentence, in turn, seductively recalls into mind Marcel Granet's commentary to the famous formula from *Hsi Tz'u Chuan*[9], a small treatise annexed to the *I Ching*: ‹‹*Liés à des espaces pleins, des temps forts alternaient avec des temps faibles, liés à des espaces vides*[10].››" To the same extent, the "full" character of spaces and the "strong" character of times (*yang)* are in direct ratio with the intensity of socializing the length and duration, a socializing defined as liturgical (Granet) or narrative (Ricœur) rhythmical becoming, which is in indirect ratio with the "empty" character of spaces and the "weak" character of times (*yin*), with the silence of ultimately not telling or writing the story.

The approach to the endless meaningfulness of the religious images constituted at the crossroads of Abrahamic monotheist religions is not far from this narratological background. "Moses' Story", rewritten by Jalal-ud-din Rumi (1207 – 1273 C. E.) in the pages of *Mathnawi*, delineates a textual space of the confluence of its previous writings contained in the *Torah* and the *Qur'an*. The overlapping of the narratives and images of Moses also coincides with a coalescence of religious spaces. When he conjures the image of the star and

[5]*Mimesis*, imitation, art, fine arts. See Francis E. Peters, *Greek Philosophical Terms*, New York University Press, New York, 1967, p. 170.
[6] Emanuel Swedenborg, *The True Christian Religion Containing the Universal Theology of the New Church / Vera Christiana Religio*, vol. I-II, New York, Swedenborg Foundation Incorporated, 1970, p. 42.
[7] "A moving image of eternity" (Plato, *Timaeus*). "A motion that admits numeration as an essential element" (Aristotle, *Physics*). Augustine, *De Civitate Dei*, *Liber* XXII, *Caput* XXX. See Bertrand Russell, *History of Western Philosophy*, Routledge, London, 1991, pp. 351-353.
[8]Ricœur, *Temps et récit*, I, p. 85.
[9]"Once *yin*, once *yang*, this is *Tao*! One time *yin*, one time *yang*, this is *Tao*!"
[10]Marcel Granet, *La Pensée chinoise*, Paris, La Renaissance du Livre, 1934, pp. 112-120.

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that of the massacre of the innocents, Rumi amalgamates in one narrative paste the story of Moses the child and that of Jesus the child. To the same extent, the archaic narrative of "the sons of God" and the imaginary of the angelic fall underline an encounter point of Judaism, Christianity and Islam. The spiritual universe of Sufi literature re-signified the narrative space of the angelic fall through the story of the equivocal condemnation of Iblis and through the hagiographic story of the impossible condemnation of Husayn Mansur Al-Hallaj (c. 858 – 922 C. E.), the Persian Sufi master and poet. The image of the "Teacher of Righteousness" or *ha-moreh li-tsedakah* underlines, at the hypothetical level, multiple encounters and coincidences in the religious space of the Essenes' or Qumranites' community of Khirbet Qumran, the imaginary universe of the original Church and of the original Islam, the doctrinaire scaffolding of the Mandaeans, an ascensional spiritual effort oriented towards the "Realm of Life". In the same context, the Messianic imaginary of the donkeys' guides must be explained from the trialectic hermeneutical perspective of the re-writings, exchanges and shared elements of Judaism, Christianity and Islam.

The religious imaginary defining for the encounter between Jewish and Christian religious spaces can be approached through the analysis of the sacrificial and thanatological imaginary in the Rabbinic Judaism and Patristic Christianity. The images of the thanatological universe expressed by the *Leviticus Rabbah* invite to be studied in the context of the Sacrificial Code of the *Book of Leviticus,* a founding text of the sacrificial system of ancient Judaism, elaborated in the Written Law and the Oral Law, *torah shebektav* and *torah shebealpe,*respectively. The adequate understanding of the rabbinic exegetical space is not possible without a thorough description of the logical and rhetorical principles that govern the corpus of the *Midrashim* texts. The rabbinic imaginary of death must be enframed into the study of the *Mishnah* and the *Aggadoth* incorporated in the *BabylonianTalmud*, *Talmud Bavli*. The complexity and depth of these images places the Adamic being into an archetypal symbolic space between the unreal reality of the seen realm and the real reality of the unseen realm, the earthly world and the Kingdom of God: man's cast away from Paradise and the initiation of death, the announcement and certitude of death, the "divine kiss", the "banquet", the crossroads of the afterlife and the "dead part of the living". The spiritual revelations of the martyrdom or sacrificial death are re-signified in the liturgical space of the *New Testament*. The theology of sacrifice, elaborated in the Christian religious space, is part of the impressive spiritual and mystical edifice built by the Apostolic Fathers, pre-Nicaean Fathers, Nicaean Fathers and post-Nicaean Fathers. The sacrificial and Eucharistic imaginary configure the Christian liturgical space in a network of continuities and discontinuities that simultaneously draw it nearer and farther from the liturgical space of Judaism.

In Ancient Iran, the Paradise or *pari-daeza* was conceived as an "enclosed space", i.e. a garden surrounded by a wall. The paradisiacal imaginary and the imaginary of the Kingdom of God are illustrated by the recollection of the dialogue between human beings and God in the Garden of Knowledge. The successive rewritings of this dialogue outline communication channels between neighboring religious spaces: Judaism and Christianity, Islam and Gnosticism, the *Sefer ha-Zohar* and *Kabbalah*. In the paradisiacal context, the tutelary images of the Divine Rose and the Divine Sun are emphasized in the writings of Dante Alighieri (c. 1265 – 1321 C. E.), Ruzbihan Baqli (1128 – 1209 C. E.), Jalal-ud-din Rumi (1207 – 1273 C. E.) and Emanuel Swedenborg (1688 – 1772 C. E.), at the confluence between Sufism and the mediaeval Christian theosophy. This exegetical perspective is taken further by the analysis of the notions of "real space" and "real reality" in classical Sufi literature. Images taken from the spiritual heritage of Jalal-ud-din Rumi's *Mathnawi* speak of the "Empire of the Unseen", the "Pilgrims' city" and the "Night of Power". The image of the Divine Sun is complemented by a gallery of images that symbolize the Divine Being: the *Simurgh*, the "Craftsman", the "elephant locked in the dark house", the "Alchemist", the

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"Absentee Friend". In the context of the human self's pilgrimage to the Divine Self, the "great *Jihad*" and "the Island" are analyzed as images of purifying and regaining the human self, through the interpretation of the writings preserved from Ibn Abbad of Ronda (1333 – 1390 C. E.), the *Tanbih* and Ibn Tufayl (c. 1105 – 1185 C. E.), the *Hayy Ibn Yaqzan*. The image of the "stranger" separates the celestial cities from the earthly cities and emphasizes the borrowing of an essential element of the Augustinian theology in the Sufi theology. The imaginary of the "ninth heaven" reveals the Gnostic background of the narrative traditions which describe the passage of the human soul, in the afterlife, through the nine heavens of the sky, governed by the Great Archon and his archons, after the angels' fall into sinfulness.

This lesser known forms of the religious imaginary, approached from a novel exegetic perspective, outline a new means of understanding the world, from the point of view of religious realities. The world: a seamless space of the epiphany of the sacred, in the cohesion of a multitude of coherent narrative and imaginary stances at whose center there is the immemorial dialogue between man and God. As subject to the laws of ephemeral life and to the anxiety of death, the human being is often lost between the Earth and the Sky. God, the Almighty and the Eternal, reveals Himself as a living principle of redemption, Who always draws near, with infinite love, the sufferings and errs of His interlocutors of flesh and blood.

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